

House Administration Committee  
Jeff Essmann, Chair  
Bill Harris, Vice Chair  
Casey Schreiner, Vice Chair  
64<sup>th</sup> Montana State Legislature  
Capitol Building - Helena, MT

January 22, 2015

RE: House Bill 126 – Burial Preservation Board Member Compensation

**Good Morning Chairman and Committee Members:**

My name is Patty Stevens and I am a Tribal Council member for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. I am here today on behalf of the CSKT to support HB 126.

Although the bill does not have a large fiscal impact, we felt it was important to be here today to voice our support for this bill and help ensure that this board has the resources to continue all the good work that they do.

To illustrate how important this work is, National Geographic itself did a recent cover story on one of the burials that this board performed. The burial was of a 12,000 year old child that was interred to our sacred earth at a place of respect (see page 136). The burial itself was attended by a variety of Tribal leaders and State professionals in Montana. The CSKT Burial Board-member pictured is Rosemary Caye from the Kootenai Culture Committee.

The featured photo in that story reflects the important work that this board does and identifies the sensitivity and respect undertaken for the return of such remains. The Burial Board is very important for maintaining cultural integrity in Montana and ensuring all remains and burial items are properly cared for.

Although the bill relates to compensation, the members on this board are not in it for the money. Our tribal board members do this work because, in our culture, the rites and ceremonies that we perform when carrying for and interring remains, means a great deal to us. Performing these rites and traditions are in themselves an honor. The members of this board take their work very serious and we want to ensure they have the support needed to continue this sensitive work. Please support HB 126 with a yes vote. I would like to leave the magazine for the committee to view.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Patty Stevens

Patty Stevens, Tribal Council  
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

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